

Relationship between Social Media and Political Participation

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Abstract - This study adopts empirical research method, which takes 1000 Chinese college students as samples and uses Stata and SPSS to conduct data analysis. The purpose of this study is to explore whether the use of social media has an impact on the political participation of Chinese college students and to explore whether the use of social media, political efficacy, individual background (gender, age, major, educational level of parents, etc.) and other factors are correlated with the political participation of college students. It is concluded that the use of social media has an impact on both online and offline political participation of Chinese college students. At the same time, college students' political participation is influenced by gender, individual identity, social background, discipline background and other factors, and there are significant group differences, presenting different characteristics of political participation. But on the whole, the consciousness of political participation needs to be improved, and the participation initiative has not been well developed. In order to promote the effective political participation of college students, it is necessary to broaden the channels of participation, give play to the subjectivity of college students, encourage the spontaneous organization of student associations, and regulate the consciousness and behaviour of college students' political participation.

Index Terms -Social Media, Political Participation, Students.

INTRODUCTION

According to China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), the 45th issue of "Statistical Report on Internet Development in China" released in 2020, as of March 2020, the number of Internet users in China reached 904 million, of which the number of Internet users via mobile phones is huge as high as 897 million, the proportion of netizens using mobile phones to access the Internet is as high as 99.3%. This shows that mobile phones have become the main way for people to surf the Internet. The rapid popularization of mobile phones has made the development of social media in full swing. CNNIC also shows that , the number of social media users in China reached 825 million, an increase of 32.98 million from the end of 2018, accounting for 96.5 percent of the netizens. With its unique technical characteristics such as strong interaction, convenient operation, open resources, and sharing at any time, social media has gradually penetrated into the daily life of young people. Social media become the young people especially university students access to information, dissemination of information, opinion, the main tool to share experience. More and more college students make their voices heard through social media and forward, comment, thumb up opinions they agree with and news resources they are interested in.



FIGURE 1. USER SIZE AND USAGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN CHINA FROM 12/2015 TO 03/2020.

As is known to all, social media is becoming a source of communication for the occurrence and fermentation of hot events in the network society. After forming the influence of the communication, it will drive news websites and traditional media to follow up the report, and eventually form a larger wave of public opinion. According to CNNIC data, in the past six months, the proportion of users who got news through social media was as high as 90.7%, the proportion of participating in news commentary on WeChat, Weibo and other social media was 62.8% and 50.2%, the proportion of forwarding news through Moments and WeChat Official Accounts account is 43.2% and 29.2%. More and more college students will pay attention to political events, comment on real-time hot events, watch political videos and share political topics.

With the rapid development of social economy, the formation of the pattern of diversity in the interests of the social economy, people's general improvement by the education level, knowledge level and the citizen quality increase, the development speed of the network geometric multiples growth, increasingly open channels of information dissemination, social organization gradually rise, the consciousness of the people's political participation and demand showed a trend of significant growth, began to consciously to participate in social public affairs management, and in different forms, to participate in political activities in different fields. College students are active users of Internet technology and pay close attention to political life and public affairs. The more opportunities they have to communicate directly with the government, the more likely they are to participate in political activities. Relatively, the influence of individuals on politics is thus enhanced [1].

They are the new force of political participation on the Internet. Currently, college students have become an important part of political participation. Due to the free and open nature of social media, the form of political participation will also take on a new look. College students are good at seeking novel information through social media, which opens up and innovates the content and form of college students' online political participation. However, in existing studies, studies on college students' social media

use and political participation are often discussed separately. Therefore, this research combines the two to carry on the discussion has certain theoretical innovation. This paper takes Chinese college students as the research object, adopts the quantitative research method, and tries to reveal the frequency, content, motivation, approach and trend of online political participation of this group through investigation and analysis, so as to investigate the relationship between the use of social media and political participation of college students. At the same time, this study took the use of social media as the independent variable, political efficacy as the moderator variable, and demographic factors (gender, grade, major, family income, etc.) as the control variable to analyze the factors affecting college students' online political participation. On the basis of empirical research, this study tries to put forward some countermeasures and suggestions for guiding and standardizing the online political participation behavior of college students.

RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCESS

Political participation is a direct reflection of the dynamic development of college students' thoughts. Political participation consciousness and behavior reflect their role in political activities. Attention to political hot topics at home and abroad and willingness to participate in political activities reflect the degree of political participation of college students. In view of this, this study selected 1,000 undergraduate students in Chinese undergraduate colleges for investigation. It provides a scientific basis for understanding the development of college students' political participation and studying the relationship between social media and contemporary college students' political participation. At the same time, it is helpful for universities to carry out targeted political participation education, thereby regulating the political participation behavior of college students, and improving their political participation awareness and level of political participation.

Literature Research Method. In this study, EBSCO, SSCI, CNKI and other databases were used to collect and study relevant documents, reports, papers and works, so as to grasp the characteristics of the times and political demands in the context of social media. At the same time, by sorting out the previous research results, it is

helpful to accurately grasp the theoretical research trends of college students' political participation, so as to provide theoretical resources and experience for systematic research.

Combination of Logical Deduction and Empirical Induction. In terms of methodology, deduction and induction have their own advantages and disadvantages. Induction can obtain new knowledge, but the knowledge obtained is not necessarily certain. Although deduction can obtain certain knowledge, it cannot obtain new knowledge, because the result obtained by deduction is already included in its premise. The empirical induction method is a method of reasoning and researching problems "from special to general" through the experiments of a few special cases, discovering laws, and conjecturing conclusions. Therefore, this research adopts the method of combining logical deduction and empirical induction, hoping to integrate the advantages of the two methods and avoid their shortcomings. Logic deduction is used to construct the theoretical part of this paper, especially to derive the research hypothesis to be verified in this paper, and empirical induction is reflected in the statistical analysis mentioned below.

Questionnaire Survey Research Method. Based on literature research and field interviews, this study formed a questionnaire. It is designed into two parts. The first part is the basic information of the investigated individuals, including gender, place of origin, grade, subject, family economic status, parents' educational level, and sense of political energy efficiency. These factors were used as independent variables in this study. The second part is the indicator of political participation as the dependent variable of this study. Specifically, the survey involves the understanding of political theoretical knowledge, election and serving as student cadres, participation in social topics, influence of political associations on campus, participation in political activities on and off campus, online political participation and offline political participation, etc.

TABLE1: PEARSON (P.) CORRELATION COEFFICIENT OF THE MAIN VARIABLES

Variable	Offline Political Participation	Online Political Participation	Social Media Use
Offline Political Participation P.	1.0000 0.0000	0.6004 0.0000	0.06253 0.3243
Online Political Participation P.	0.6463 0.0000	1.0000 0.0000	0.1375 0.0030
Social Media Use P.	0.1291 0.0125	0.1913 0.0000	1.0000 0.0000

CONCLUSION

This study conducts a detailed questionnaire survey and analysis on the current political participation of Chinese university students, and summarizes the basic situation of Chinese university students' political participation. On the basis of the existing political participation theory and the survey data, this paper explores the influencing factors of

A total of 1,000 questionnaires were issued and 1,000 valid questionnaires were recovered in this survey. Among them, 435 boys accounted for 43.5%; 565 girls accounted for 56.5%. The survey object has a reasonable structure and clear levels, and the survey results have strong credibility and persuasion. The study select 15 representative universities in China as samples. The investigation adopts the method of stratified sampling to select the samples, and divides the domestic colleges and universities into three regions: the east, the middle and the west. In each region, 5 universities were selected to conduct questionnaire survey and interview survey on college students, so as to comprehensively and concretely grasp the reality, generality, personality characteristics and prominent problems of orderly political participation of college students under the background of new media, so as to provide detailed and reliable data for this study.

Interview Method. Based on the actual situation, this study will recruit interviewing volunteers from Chinese universities and conduct semi-structured in-depth interviews with volunteers in a face-to-face manner to understand the status of their social media use and political participation, so as to increase the explanatory power of relevant data and support Related conclusions.

Statistical Analysis Method. Statistical analysis refers to the method of recognizing and revealing the status quo of things or their mutual relations, changing laws, and development laws through the analysis and research of the quantitative relationships such as the scale, scope, and degree of the research objects. This study will use SPSS 25.0 statistical software to conduct descriptive statistical analysis and related statistical analysis on the data obtained, and explore the basic status quo and influencing factors of Chinese college students' political participation in the context of social media.

college students' political participation. The basic conclusions are as follows:

First of all, the awareness of political participation is hig. College students generally pay close attention to politics and public affairs and often get relevant information through social media. In the survey, 82.5% of the respondents said they "often participate" in the discussion of political or social topics, accounting for the majority of the respondents, and 13.2% said they "occasionally participate".

Statistics show that most of the surveyed college students participate in political or social discussions. Moreover, they have a high proportion of participation in community activities, social practice and voluntary activities, and tend to engage in political participation within the system by approaching the political system. The discussion of political or social topics is the most direct way for college students to achieve political participation, and it is a concentrated reflection of their political participation consciousness. However, due to the diversity of opinions in the discussion of hot social issues, college students need to strengthen their personal political positions and maintain correct political tendencies when participating, so as to avoid being affected by extreme speech[2].

Secondly, social media is the main way for college students to participate in politics. As the informatization approach becomes more sophisticated, it has contributed to the rapid development of social media and other network platforms. As a youth group, college students are the most sensitive to new things and the most accepted group. They also show obvious preferences in the way of political participation. College students mainly participate in the discussion of political or social topics through social media and interpersonal communication. Among them, social media has become the main channel for university students to participate in the discussion of political or social topics. Due to the complexity of online public opinion and the unevenness of public opinion information, college students need to improve their ability to discern and network moral awareness.

Thirdly, the form of political participation is relatively unitary. Political participation is the political rights that citizens are endowed with, and it also reflects their status and role in political life. Specific political participation behaviors for college students are often manifested in various forms of political activities. In terms of participation behavior, the form of political participation of college students is relatively simple[3]. The main reason is that college students do not have the ability to participate in all aspects of political activities. In addition, the channel of participation is also relatively narrow, mostly limited to participate in organizational activities. However, some college students consciously follow and participate in politics and public affairs through social media. In terms of participation content, it is basically school affairs and part of social public affairs and problems with low efficiency.

Last but not least, there are group differences of college students' political participation. College students' political participation is an important way to reflect their personal political views and national concepts. Individual differences, group characteristics, family or social background factors of college students all affect their specific political participation performance. The status of college students' political participation consciousness and behavior also shows obvious group differences. In the investigation of factors affecting political participation, educational background and information exposure are

reflected in grade and subject variables in this study, and the sense of political energy efficiency directly affects the political participation behavior of college students and affects key dependent variables.

SUGGESTIONS

Political participation of contemporary college students is a long-term, systematic and historical project. The current situation of their political participation is the result of the action of subjective and objective variables[4]. It is not realistic and feasible to change or upgrade one aspect of conditions to comprehensively improve college students' political participation. Only when we attach great importance to and pay attention to contemporary college students themselves, schools, families, society and other factors, can we achieve good results. Therefore, the political participation of contemporary college students must be placed in a crucial position, based on China's basic national conditions, gradually improve the various mechanisms and systems of political participation of college students.

Firstly, a good social environment is an objective condition for college students' political participation in benign development. In order to expand effective channels of political participation, it is imperative to deepen reform of the political system. Through reforming the political system, establishing and improving the political participation mechanism, the political participation of university students is regulated as a fixed system. This will not only provide institutional guarantee for the political participation of university students, but also enable their political participation activities to be carried out within the legal framework, reducing the possibility of non-institutional participation. At the same time, the university management system should proceed from the real environment and create an open environment management model, especially in areas that are practically related to students such as logistics services and teaching. Relevant school departments should pay attention to students' attitudes and opinions, encourage students to participate in school affairs, school development and construction, and establish effective participation and feedback mechanisms for students. In addition, in view of the current poor political expression channels of college students, it is necessary to actively broaden the channels of college students' political participation, play a role from multiple angles and all directions, and promote internal communication and communication among college students.

What's more, expand the platform for college students' political participation. College students' political participation must be expanded from online and offline channels to promote their active, orderly, reasonable and legal participation in political life. At present, social media, with its unique advantages such as immediacy of information, equality of status, virtuality of form and interactivity of communication, provides a broad platform and convenient channels for college students to participate in political affairs. Universities should give full play to the

role of social media and make full use of the advantages of social media as a network platform. This requires universities to use social media platforms to guide college students to strengthen their political theory studies, and to absorb outstanding cultural achievements at home and abroad, thereby enhancing their ability to resist various unhealthy cultures on the Internet. However, compared with the imperfect norms and imperfect order of online political participation, offline political participation has relatively sound institutional guarantees and perfect organizational guarantees. It has an incomparable advantage in online political participation in guiding the standardization of political participation in college students. It can be seen that online and offline political participation platforms have their own characteristics in releasing the enthusiasm of college students for political participation, enriching the forms of college students' political participation, and enhancing the sense of political efficiency of college students. Therefore, in guiding universities to actively and orderly participate in political participation, universities should focus on combining the advantages of offline politics with online political participation. To this end, the university should continue to expand the platform for university students' political participation, and guide them to construct correct political participation views and rational political participation behaviors, so that they can grow into qualified citizens who can play the role of national construction and development.

Thirdly, Enhance the breadth and depth of political participation of college students. The political participation of college students must be changed to closely link the actual situation and establish a long-term linkage mechanism. This requires a variety of political participation activities in accordance with social realities, so that the content of political participation of university students is more diverse and flexible. For this reason, college students should be encouraged as much as possible to participate in all aspects, levels and stages of social and political life such as scientific research and practice, urban construction and planning, and democratic supervision and discussion. Cultivating college students' awareness of political participation and improving their ability to participate in politics cannot be achieved overnight, and requires long-term and systematic persistence. This requires universities to incorporate political participation in common sense education into general education, so that college students can deepen their understanding and understanding of the principles, procedures, channels, carriers, and objectives of political participation in the process of learning. Specifically, on the one hand, it is necessary to strengthen college students' civic quality education, improve their ability to correctly recognize their citizenship, and fully grasp the political rights and obligations granted to college students by the law[5]. On the other hand, it is necessary to increase the introduction and content of the procedures, channels, carrier platforms and other aspects of college students' political participation, and guide college students

to clarify which are the political participation procedures within the legal scope and which are beyond the legal scope. This will enable college students to promote the standardization and institutionalization of their own political participation behaviors in the process of mastering the political participation methods within the system norms, thereby enhancing their level of political participation.

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